



The Cancer Recovery Pyramid: Attitude Resource #2

Discover Your Beliefs

Literally millions of cancer survivors radically change their beliefs about cancer and their beliefs about life. Many consider this to be the most fundamental aspect of healing with the mind. This truth has a central place in your own recovery efforts.

Attitudes have to do with one's state of mind, with one's mental habits. Beliefs are something different; now we are talking about convictions, the implications of certainty surrounding mental positions. Beliefs actually generate the attitudes and emotions you experience.

There are three widely held beliefs that work against overcoming cancer:

1. A diagnosis of cancer means my certain death.
2. The treatment program for cancer is drastic, is of questionable effectiveness, and involves many unpleasanties.
3. This situation "just happened" to me and therefore there is little I can do to influence it.

All of these beliefs are untrue! The truth about these statements is:

1. Cancer, no matter how advanced, may or may not mean death.
2. A wide range of treatments exist with the potential to be effective. The difficulties in recovery are far outweighed by the benefits.
3. Most illnesses do not "just happen." On several levels, our ability to influence health, either positively or negatively, is at work.

Beliefs have a powerful effect on physical realities. Our beliefs influence the way we perceive illness and literally control our response to it.

Can beliefs affect recovery? Consider this. Beliefs and expectations constantly contribute to actual experience in all areas of life, including the experience of cancer. If we believe a rainy day means gloom, gloom is what we experience.

But beliefs can be changed. They can be chosen. And beliefs determine emotions, which have a direct link to physical health. In short, beliefs about disease, treatment and one's personal role in healing is inextricably linked with outcomes.

Awareness of fundamental beliefs is often the first, and certainly one of the most dramatic, ways you can improve your circumstances. If you harbor the belief that cancer means death, challenge it! The fact is, there are long-term survivors of every type of cancer, including many patients who have been told by doctors that there was no hope.

Analyze your beliefs

Complete the following sentences with the first thoughts/feelings that come to mind:

1. When I think of my cancer diagnosis, my thought is _____
2. I believe my cancer treatment is _____
3. The one thing I believe would best help me is _____

Reflect on how your beliefs align with the truths. Talk to others who have successfully traveled the cancer journey. Discover what they believe. Vow to change your self-limiting beliefs today. Survival is possible. Believe it!